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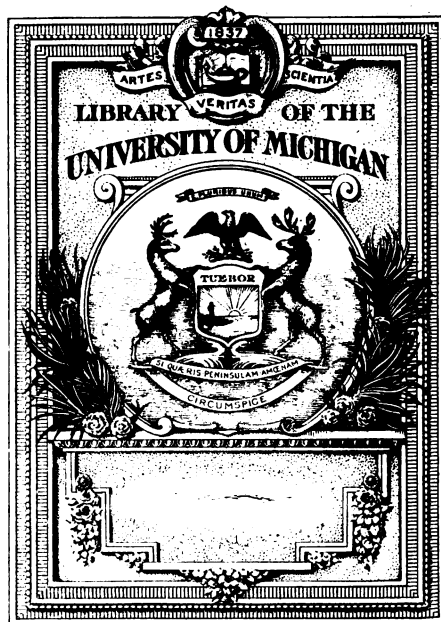
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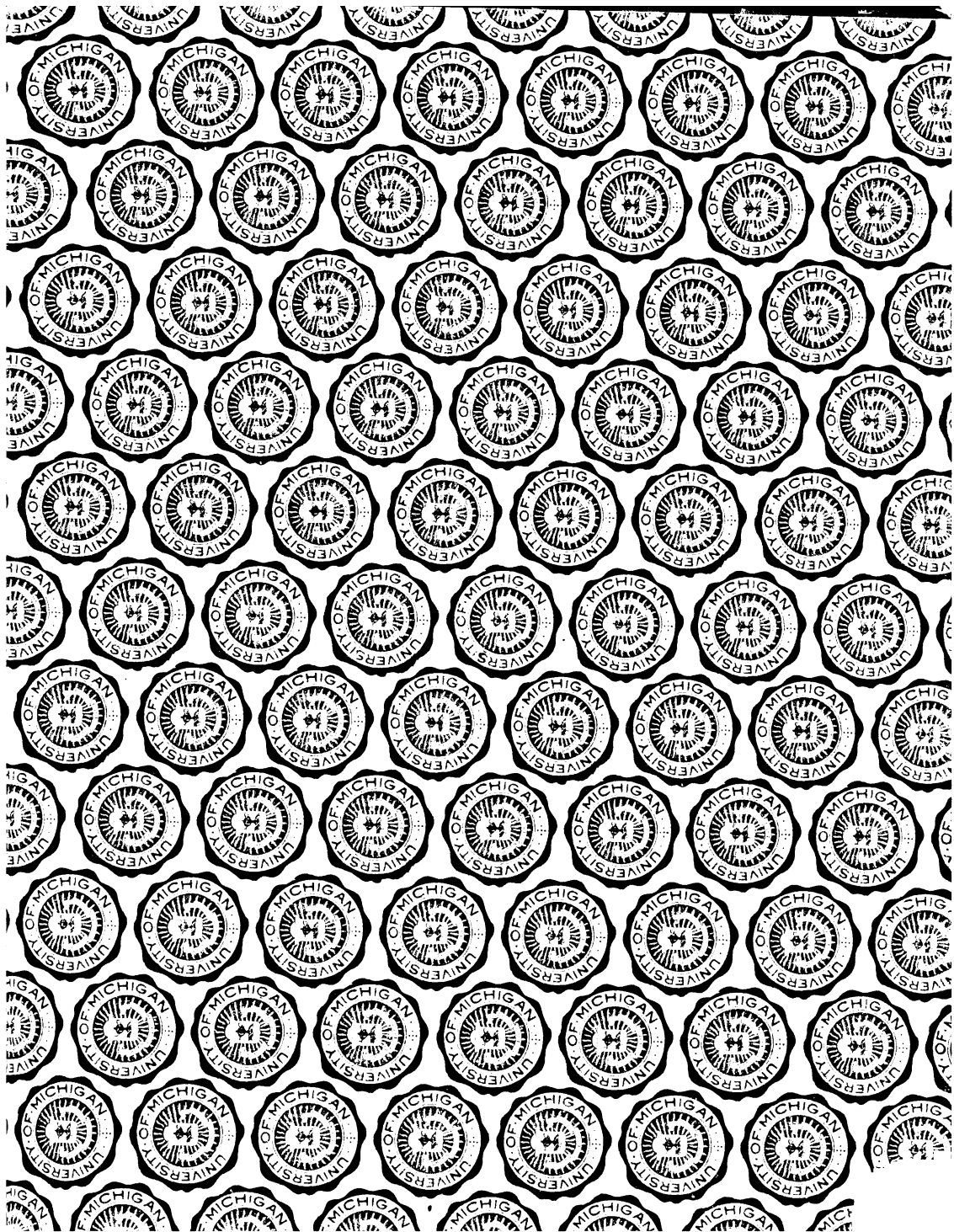
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# DISCOURSE

CONCERNING THE

## DEVOTIONS

OF THE

### Church of Rome,

Especially, as compared with those of the

CHURCH of ENGLAND,

In which it is shewn,

That whatever the *Romanists* pretend,  
there is not so true *Devotion* among them, nor such  
rational Provision for it, nor Encouragement to  
it, as in the Church established by Law among us.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Benj. Tooke* at the Ship in *St. Paul's*  
Church-Yard, 1685.

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# A DISCOURSE

Concerning the

# DEVOTIONS

OF THE

# Church of Rome, &c.

**I**T is certainly one of the greatest Commendations that can be given of any Church, or Body of Christians, that a man can with Truth affirm of it, that the Doctrines which they profess, the Rules and Orders under which they live, that the Frame and Constitution of the Church tendeth directly to make men more pious and devout, more penitent and mortified, more heavenly minded, and every way of better Lives than the way and profession of other Christians; For to work men up to this holy Frame and Disposition was one of the main designs of the Gospel of Christ, which intends to govern mens Actions, and reform their Temper, as well as to inform their Understandings, and direct their Belief. And in this particular it differs much from all the *Ethicks* of the learned Heathen: For whereas they design'd especially to exalt the Passions, and to raise up the Mind above it self, by commending the high and pompous Vertues, thereby to stir men up to great Designs, and to appear bold and braving in the affairs



real Practice of it which they would make us believe; but that even the best which they pretend to, is such as doth by no means besit a truly Christian Spirit;

I'll discourse in this Method:

1. I'll instance in the several Expressions of Devotion, the Motives to it, or Assistances of it, which the Church of *Rome* pretends to, and on which she is used to magnifie her self.

2. I will alledge the just Exceptions which we have against such their Pretences.

3. And then show that they are so far from encouraging true Devotion, that many things both in their Doctrine and Discipline directly tend to the Destruction of it.

4. I'll shew what excellent Provision is made in the Church of *England*, for the due exercise of all the parts of Devotion, and what Stress is laid on it, and on a good Life among us.

*First*, Though Devotion is properly and chiefly in the mind, a due sense of God and Religion, yet it is not sufficient if it stop there: For there are certain outward Acts which are either in themselves natural and proper Expressions, or else are strictly required of us by God, as Duties of Religion, and Evidences of the devout temper of our Minds; and these are called Acts of Devotion. And all the Commendation that can be given of any Church, on Account of Devotion, must be either, that there is a true Foundation laid for it in mens Minds, or constant Provision made for the due Exercise of it, all necessary Encouragement given to it, and a suitably, strict and regular Practice of it observable among them. And there are several things which are not at all insisted on by us, which they of the Church of *Rome* boast of, as serving to some or all of these purposes, which I shall represent as fairly as I can, that we may see what there is in that Church that doth answer such great pretences.





4. They urge also the multitude of Pictures and Images of several Famous Men and Women, who have in an eminent manner served and pleased God, and been instrumental in converting the World, as very proper Assistances of a Mans Devotion; instructing some, they being the Books of the Unlearned, and sensibly affecting and alluring all to the Imitation of the Persons whom they represent.

5. Sometimes they commend their Church for the Fastings, and other Acts of Severity and Mortification, used not only by the *Monks* and Regulars, but by all sorts of Men, according to the Rules of their Church, on set days of the Week or Seasons of the Year; as well as such Austerities as are enjoined by their Confessors, by way of Penance; their going bare-foot and bare-headed in Processions, their whipping and lashing themselves, their drawing great Chains and Weights after them, as great and proper Instances of Self-denial and Devotion.

6. They place also a great Deal of Religion in Pilgrimages, which the more Devout sort take, and spend their Estates, and sometimes their Lives in, to *Jerusalem, Rome, Loretto, Mount-ferrat, to St. Thomas, at Canterbury St. Winifrid's Well*, or some such other places where some extraordinary Person hath lived, or some strange Relique is left, or where they reckon God hath on some Occasion or other wonderfully manifested himself; and they reckon that the very visiting or kissing these, are either an Argument of truly Devout Minds, or that which will make them so. And their Manuals or Books which their Priests give into the Peoples Hands, do not fail by all the art imaginable, to endeavour to screw up Mens Devotion, even to rapture and extasie in Commendation of these Practises and Orders, even as if they would have us believe that there is no true Religion and

and Devotion without these, and that where there are these things practised, it is a certain Sign that the mind is affected as it ought, and Piety flourisheth in the highest Degree.

And besides these Matters of Practice, there are also several Doctrines, and Opinions peculiar to themselves, which they reckon do naturally tend to the Advancement of true Devotion. As,

7. Their Doctrine concerning the Intercession of Saints for us, and the Advantage of Invocation or Prayer to them, and that we of the Church of *England* want one of the greatest Encouragements to Prayer and Devotion that can be, who neither own nor make use of these Helps, and therefore that we cannot have such hope of Success and Blessing as they have.

8. Their Doctrine concerning the Merit of Good Works and Supererogation, is of the same Nature, in their esteem: For the more Worth you suppose in any Action, the greater Incouragement is there to the Performance of it, and therefore surely it must be a most irresistible motive to Devotion, to persuade men that the worth and value of it is such, as that you may by it purchase Heaven not only for your selves, but for others also.

9. Their belief of Purgatory, and of the validity of Prayers for the Dead, doth naturally tend to excite men to Devotion, say they; for here is a greater Scope and Occasion for our Prayers, we may hope to be instrumental to more good, more Persons to be relieved and helped by our Prayers, than are supposed in the Devotions of the Church of *England*.

10. And especially their Doctrine and Practice of Confession, Penance and Absolution, they look on as so necessary to Devotion, that it is a wonder with them that there should be any show of it, where there are not

not received and practised : For a particular Confession of all Sins to a Priest being so strictly required, they say is the readiest way to bring men to a Sense of and shame for their Sins; and Penance being also imposed presently on them, will surely make Men to be more afraid of sinning again when they see it must cost them so dear, and that they may not despair or despond, by Reason of the Multitude or Weight of their former Sins, but may be encouraged to strive more earnestly against Sin for the future, the Priest gives them Absolution of what is passed, at the same time encouraging their hope, as well as exciting their fear, and endeavouring by the same Method both to allure, to force and to shame Men into Amendment.

Lastly they insist much also on the Validity of their Ordinations, the Truth and Succession Unity and Authority, of their Church, and the Obedience that is payed to the Rules and Orders of it, as mighty Helps and Assistances, and Encouragements to Devotion; when they are so sure of the Sacraments being duly administered, and all other Acts of Authority rightly performed, when the Laws of the Church, for the Punishment of Offenders are duly executed, and when the Church hath Power to oblige all to an Uniform and Regular Practice.

All these things, say they, do either encourage and excite men to Devotion, or assist or direct them in the exercise of it, give more room or afford better Occasions for it, or else show more fully the Necessity of such and such parts of it then what is received and practised in the Church of *England*; and therefore the Church of *England*, that wanteth these wanteth also much of the *Occasion, Matter, Opportunities and Arguments for Devotion*: so that laying aside all disputes concerning Articles of Faith, they doubt not but it will be readily granted, that at least, they



they are a more *devout People*; whatever their *Belief* is, their *Practise* is more agreeable to that Self-denial and Mortification commanded in Scripture; that God is more constantly and reverently served among them than he is among us; that they take more Pains, are at more Cost and Trouble in the Worship of God, which they think is an Instance of a good religious mind, and will be most secure of God's Acceptance.

These are, I think indeed, the most that they do urge for themselves in this point, and there is something of appearance of Truth in all this. Most of these Instances are such as may perhaps be very taking at first sight with some people, they having a shew of Regularity, Strictness and Severity, or else of being proper Helps and Assistances of Devotion: For Men are wont to admire any thing that looks odd or big, especially if others have but the Confidence highly to praise and extol it. But if we examine them, we shall find them to fall infinitely short of such specious Pretences; some of them to be unlawful, and those that are good in themselves, to be some way or other spoiled in the use of them; always they err in some material part or Circumstance; and taken all together, they have nothing in them which evidence any true devout Temper, either designed to be wrought by the Church, or actually working in the People: Much less do they bespeak greater Devotion than is required and practised in our Church.

For it hath been well observed by the judicious Sir *Edwin Sandys*, that the Church of *Rome* hath so contrived its Rules and Orders, as rather to comply with, and fit every Temper and Inclination good or bad, than to work any real good effect on any. And therefore as it hath several things which openly agree with, and please the profane and debauch'd, so it must be granted, that it hath somewhat also to suit with and gratifie the

melancholly Temper, where the devoutly disposed may find somewhat an agreeable Retreat: And therefore one would be apt to suspect that the most strict and severe of their Orders, were kept up rather out of a pollick end, to please and quiet the People, than really to advance true Piety to God and Devotion. But however it is plain, that taking the whole Frame of that Church together, it doth not design to promote serious and true Devotion; but only to make a Noise, and to appear so to do. For when I see the same Church, tho' sometimes seeming to countenance the utmost Severity as necessary, yet at other times to give all Liberty, and let the Reins loose to all kind of Debauchery, I have just reason to fear they are not in earnest for Religion: For all such irregular Heats, are a sign of bad Principles, or a distemper'd Constitution. Just as if I should see the same person sometimes desperately dissolute and debauch'd, and at other times intolerably strict and severe, and this interchangeably and often, I shall much question his strictness, whether it be sincere. If his Sense of Piety were real, it would be more lasting and uniform; and therefore without Breach of Charity, I think I may look on him in his greatest Severity, rather to act a part on a Stage, and to serve a present Turn and Occasion, than to be really in his mind what such Strictness would represent him. And therefore whatever true Devotion is in any of that Communion, ought to be ascrib'd to somewhat else, than to the Constitution of that Church: For even those things which they are used to boast most of, which I have mentioned already, we shall easily find to have little that is truly commendable, much that is greatly faulty in them; and if their best things are no better, what are their worst? If the Subject of their *Glorious* is *Glory*, what will become of the rest?

2. And therefore I'll now shew what we have justly to except against their fore-mentioned pretences to Devotion.

1. As for Monastery in general, which they boast so much of, calling it *Status Perfectionis & religiosus*, as if besides the State of Men in Holy Orders, that were a State of *Perfection*, and nothing else worthy the Name of *Religious*. We confess, that scarcely as to any thing concerning the External of Religion, doth the Church of England distinguish it self from the *Romish* Church so much, as that there is not any Provision made, or so much as a Supposition of such Monasteries, or religious Houses, or publick places of Retirement (for devout People, as they are called, being again over-sailed among us. For tho' we are not so rash as utterly to abolish and throw away every thing that at any time had been abused to Superstition, yet we are very well contented that Monasteries should never be rebuilt among us. For we do not look on the Life of Monks as any great Help to Devotion, or as an instance of true Religion prevailing where they are found; much less that they are necessary in the Christian Church.

For it is evident that the first and purest Ages of the Church did not know any thing of them: Almost three Centuries passed without any mention of them in Ecclesiastical History: *Antony* and *Paul* in the Dioclesian Persecution, being taken notice of as the first of that Way. We read indeed of some that did lead a more than ordinary severe Course, and denied themselves much of the (perhaps) lawful Pleasures of this Life, in respect to Religion and the other Life; but these were not *Monks*, or the modern *Ascetics*; tho' it hath been the way of the Church of *Rome* in more instances than this to impose some new thing on the World upon the Reputation of some good and reverend Old Name. For

the Lives of the ancient *Aseeticks*, or mortified Men, differed much from the present *Monks* of the Church of *Rome*. We find not that they engaged themselves in a solemn Vow, distinct from, or above that of their Baptism. For whatever their general Course of Life was, they would take the Liberty to break their Rule sometimes in order to extraordinary Charity, or when an occasion offered it self of doing more good; as is recorded particularly concerning *Spiridon* a Bishop in *Cyprus*. Nor do we find that they always continued in the same State of Life; but took such a severe course on themselves at some particular times, and on some special occasions, (as the *Nazarites* of old did) to humble, and bring their Bodies under, [and as St. *Paul* adviseth the married; but not to continue always so, lest Satan should tempt them; and they reckoned it in an higher degree praise-worthy for every Act of Mortification to be voluntary, than that they should once for all force themselves to it: And therefore still retained a Power to themselves, and did vary from this Method sometimes, and on occasions would indulge themselves a greater, tho' still a lawful Liberty. They took not on them the Vow of *Poverty*, nor placed Perfection in *Beggery*, but reckoned every Creature of God to be good; and even the outward good things of this Life to be the Gift and Grace of God, if they be well employed, according to 1. *Pet.* 4. 10. and remembered that Saying of our Blessed Saviour, *Mat.* 23. 35. *It is more blessed to give than to receive*. Nor did they vow what the Church of *Rome* now calls *Chastity*, but reckoned themselves as chaste in Wedlock; and as for *Obedience*, the third part of the *Monks* Vow, they thought it sufficient to obey the Commands of God, and knew not of any other Obedience due from them, but only to their Governours in Church and State, whose lawful Commands they reckoned themselves obliged to, in order

der to the more regular Administration of Affairs, and the more peaceable Government of the World; much less had they any distinct Rules to be set up in Competition with the Laws of God, and urged as necessary to Salvation, making even the *Monks* Rules apparently do, as might be easily made to appear. Such religious Men as these, there were in the first Ages, who practised a stricter Devotion than others, that God's Name might be the more hallowed by them, the more it was profaned by the rest of the World, and who were more than ordinary instant and constant in Prayers for a Blessing on the Church and State, of which they were Members; and by the Strictness and Severity of their Lives, made some amends for the Negligence and Viciousness of the Age in which they lived.

And many such as these, we doubt not, are now among us, who yet utterly dislike the *Popish* Mankery. And if by the Monastick Life all this were done, and nothing else designed, it were justly to be commended: For let Men derry themselves as much as they will, and use their Christian Liberty to the Restraint of themselves by a voluntary Self-denial and Mortification, to keep their Bodies under, and thereby get a better Temper of Mind. But all this will not suffice in the Church of Rome: For it is not enough for a man to live so strict and holy a Life, unless he enter into a Vow particularly to this purpose. Nay, though a man do take on him all these Vows of *Chastity*, *Poverty* and *Obedience*; and tho' they be made to his Bishop or Confessor, who one would think were the properest persons in the Case; yet still it is not sufficient; he cannot be said to be in this *religious State*, unless he vow Obedience to another kind of Spiritual Jurisdiction. So that it is neither the living so strictly, nor vowing

to live strictly, as the most severe *Monks*; but it is their being of a particular Order, and living under such and such Rule, that is so meritorious; so that by Monkenry indeed, Monkenry is encouraged, and some politick and Secular Designs answered; but the Advancement of Piety and Devotion is not principally designed or intended. But to discourse more distinctly of it;

In a Monastick Life these three things are especially remarkable.

*First*, The secluded, and perhaps Heremetical way of living which they lead.

*Secondly*, The Constancy and Regularity of Devotions practised there.

*Thirdly*, The Severity of their Rules, and Austerity of their Lives.

But I must needs say, that there is little of true Devotion, that I can discover in any of these:

*First*, Their being shut up from the World, or living in Deserts, is no very proper Instance of their Devotion, or agreeable to the Design of Christianity.

For a man should converse in the World, else he cannot so well understand it, what is amiss, or wanting in it, nor how even to apply and place the Emphasis of his Prayers.

A man that lives in a Wilderness, or shut up always in a Monastery, it is possible that he may keep himself free from the Defilements of the World; but yet it must be looked on as much more noble and commendable to converse in the World, and yet to avoid the Pollution of it.

And tho' by such a secluded Life he may escape one kind of Temptation, yet still he will be at least as liable to the two others, that arise from the *Devil*, or his own *Flesh* and *Temper* as ever. And if he avoid some Sins, yet still he will be more subject to others, Sowness, Morose-

Moroseness, Melancholly, Censoriousness, spiritual Pride, and other Sins of as high a Nature as those, which by being shut up from the World he pretends to avoid. And yet such as these are generally legible and observable in the very Looks, Conversation and Carriage of *Monks* and *Hermits*.

Indeed Retiredness sometimes is an excellent help to the Mind, by giving it time to recollect it self, and to reflect on its former Miscarriages, and the better to prepare it self for its future Encounters in the World. But a man may exceed in the Measures and Degrees of this, as well as of other Conveniences and lawful Enjoyments; and so it may become a Snare and an Evil to him: For the mind will naturally be as much tir'd with Solitude as with Business: Besides, that the Devil is always most busie when men are idle, and Diversion and Recreation is as necessary to most Tempers, as Health and Cheerfulness are; and fits a man on for the Duties of Religion. For the keeping the Mind in a constant Beat, tho' of Devotion, will in a short time weaken its Spring and dull its Edge; and the Acts of Devotion in such a mind, will, it's to be feared, be rather a formal piece of Drudgery than a reasonable Service. And though we should grant, that by being confined to a Monastery, a man might better escape the Disturbances of any kind of Sin; yet it must be granted, that he cannot be in so much capacity of doing good in the World as if he conversed freely with it.

And *Saxony* quotes it as a most remarkable Saying of some of the first Monks, That he that absters from Evil, but doeth no Good, ought to be esteemed a very bad Man; and so the Commands of Scripture enjoin us to take Care to do Good, as well as to abstain from Evil, else we shall be reckoned among the unprofitable Servants. We are sure that publick Service ought to be preferred before private; the Glory of God, and the

the Good of Men being more advanced by it; and therefore, though that man that lives in a Wilderness, and serves God there when he is forced to it by Persecution, may hope for a Blessing, tho' he be alone, and neither worshippeth God in Publick, nor gives a good Example to the World; yet he that runs into a Wilderness to be wondred at and admired, and neglects the ordinary and most useful way of serving God, there is too much reason to fear *he bath his Reward*. At least how far soever it may please God to pardon his blind Zeal, and want of Discretion, yet certainly this Example of his ought not to be recommended to all, as a Rule for them to walk by. The first Monks we grant, were very good and pious Men, and were compelled to forsake their Houses, and live in Solitude; but it is very unreasonable to make their manner of Life a Pattern to be followed in the quiet and peaceable Ages of the Church. For this would be to shew our selves insensible of the goodness of God to us, in giving us the Liberty of serving him freely and openly, and that we dare profess our Religion without fear of losing our Lives. And for the same reason we should still chuse to celebrate the Sacrament in an *upper Room*, because our Blessed Saviour, and his Holy Apostles did so; and should have our religious Assemblies in *Crypts* and Vaults under Ground, because the first Christians, in times of Difficulty and Persecution, often durst use no other.

And as the Solitude of a Monastick Life is no proper Assistance or Expression of true Devotion, was not known in the first Ages of the Church, and afterwards was not taken up of Choice, but by Necessity: So also in the *last* place, I observe, that the Gospel of Christ, and the Rules of Living, which are given us by himself, and his Holy Apostles, never enjoin or suppose any such thing. We are always supposed to live in Company and Society; and



and accordingly the Precepts of our Saviour and the Apostles are adapted to the common Cases of Men, and the Concerns of such as converse freely in the World. And therefore I must needs say, that it hath been very wisely ordered, that there should be new and distinct Rules made for those that delight in this solitary and Monastick way of Life: For they are such a kind of men as the Gospel of Christ hath no proper Rules for.

*Secondly*, And I am afraid that there is as little true Devotion in their so frequent and constant Prayers enjoyed and practised in their Monasteries, though this be confessedly what is most commendable in their way of Life, and is the only way by which they themselves can pretend to do any Good in the World. (If I except those, which are but very few, that work with their Hands.)

Praise and Prayer is therefore acceptable with God, as it is in the volunrary Expression of our Souls, a Free-will Offering and Sacrifice which we offer to God, in consideration of his infinite Excellencies and Perfections in himself, his former undeserved Goodness to us, and our Liableness to him. Now the constant Prayers used in their Monasteries, in more particulars than one, come short of that true Devotion due from Men to their Maker: For first, they are as much as can be forced on a rational Being, and on that account must needs lose much of their Worth and Acceptableness. The *Monks* are obliged by the Rules of their several Orders to say such and such Prayers, and just at such and such times, whatever Devotion or Intention of Mind they have; and they are severely punished if they fail of them. Exactly at Midnight, at two or three a Clock in the Morning, so very often, and at so very unreasonable times, that many have confessed this strictness of their Devotions, to be of all the greatest Burden of their Lives;

And yet this they must do in Imitation of some holy Man of Old, who is recorded to have pray'd at these Houres; whereas these Mens Devotions is not warm enough to keep them awake when they are at Prayer. And therefore these Prayers not being the free Emanations of their own mind, methinks the praise of them is not so much due to the *Monks* themselves, as to the head and founder of their Order, who obliged them to such Rules.

And their Devotion is little more praise-worthy than that of the *Jews* at *Avignon*, and several other Places, who are once in a Week forced to go to Church and hear a Sermon, (as these *Monks* are) at least to sit there whilst a Sermon is preached, and return home as good Christians as they went thither.

But then they are not only thus strictly obliged to such Hours of Prayer, for that were somewhat tolerable, they might possibly be intent on their Prayers, notwithstanding. But they are at the same time taught, that they need only say the Words with their Mouths; it is not absolutely necessary that their mind should go along with them, and this together with the other must needs spoyle all true Devotion. The frequency and unreasonable of their Prayers, will make it very difficult for them to attend as they ought, and their Doctrine concerning the No-necessity of attention at Prayers, will certainly make them to yield to these difficulties, and so there may be abundance of Words said, but no Devotion perform'd.

Besides all this, they have a way of being eased of this trouble of the Prayers, for according to their Casuists, it is allowable for a man to get or hire another to say his Prayers for him. At least he may be dispensed with by his Superiour, and this Dispensation is good, whether there be a just Reason or Occasion for it or no, accord-

according to an excellent Maxim of theirs, *Non ad Vgloriam, sed ad Iustitiam requiritur Causa.*

And if after all this, Men still will be more than they need strict in their Prayers, according to the Rules of their Orders, they almost constantly offend in the End, and Design of their Devotions. For they do them not so much to benefit the World, or work themselves up to a better temper of Mind ; But to perform a task imposed on them, and which they have vowed to perform, or especially to merit by their works. For they do not so much as pretend that this strictness in Devotion is absolutely Necessary for their Salvation, (for else why do they not enjoin it to all, seeing all have the same need of Salvation ? ) and therefore the sole end of all this strictness and constancy in Prayers, is only to get Heaven for others. Which Opinion, besides that it will mightily discourage Men of an ordinary Charity, from being very intent on what they do, when they are sensible they Labour only for another ; It countenanceth also a false and dangerous Doctrine concerning the Merit of good Works, and encourageth all vicious practices in other Men, who will hope to be saved, tho not by their own Prayers, yet by the Prayers of these holy Monks said for them.

So that on many accounts, there is little of true Devotion to be found in that constant course of Prayers, said so regularly by the Monks and Hermits ; Not to mention several other particulars, concerning the *Frame* and *Language* of their Prayers, the *Object* or *Persons* worshipped or prayed to, the *Persons prayed for*, and the like, which I may have Occasion to mention afterwards, which being put together, do abundantly show the impropriety, and the worthlessness of such Devotions.

*Thirdly*, And as to the *Austerities* of the Lives of their Monks and Nuns, the Punishments which they inflict

on themselves, as they profess for the sake of Religion, by *coarse and uneasy Garments, scanty Food and Fare, long and tedious Watchings, frequent and cruel Whippings, and Lashings*, and other such **Course** and Harsh Treatments, which they use towards their own Bodies. I confess I pity them, but can discern little or no true Christian Devotion in them.

For *all Severity* to our Bodies is not Devotion, or any part of that Self-denial which the Gospel requires; nor is this of theirs, though they pretend it to be *for the sake of Religion*; but their insisting so strictly on it, and valuing themselves so much on it, is of very *bad Consequence* to Religion.

*All Punishment* which men inflict on themselves is not Religion, nor commendable, nor is the patient bearing of it always a Sign of a true Christian Temper. Christ hath nowhere told us, that he that can fast longest, or endure most Lashes is the best Man; but he that governeth himself and his Life best. We have strange Instances of this Insensibleness of Pain in many of the worst Principles and most profligate Consciences: The Devil hath his Martyrs as well as God; and if the voluntarily inflicting Punishment on themselves be a Sign of Devotion, the Priests of *Baal*, 1 *Kings* 18. must have been a very devout Generation of Men. Therefore it is not any religious Commendation of a Man, that he can stoutly whip, or lash himself, or bear it from another without flinching: Such a man might have made a good *Gladiator*, but seems not so well qualified for a *Christian*.

Nor is all Punishment which Men inflict on themselves, and say they do it for the *sake of God and Religion*, always a Sign of true Devotion: For in other Cases, it is not Men's Saying that they design well, which will make their Actions acceptable with God; but it is their doing what he hath commanded, and for the ends which he

he designed and intended, with which he is well pleased. And it too often happens, that mendo Actions having a show of Sanctity, and of great Self-denial, which yet are received by God only, with a *who hath required this at your hands?*

Self-denial indeed is commanded in Scripture, and is necessary also to many and excellent Purposes, to subdue a man's Passions and Affections, and to bring him to a right understanding of himself; to put a man in mind of leaving the pleasant things of this World, sensibly to affect him with the Condition of those that are in Misery and always want them, and to inure him to bear patiently the adverse things, or whatever it shall please God to lay upon him. It is necessary that a man should have a mind always ready and prepared to lose all for Christ; and therefore he ought often to deny himself somewhat for the Sake of Christ, that he may give full proof to himself, that his mind is affected as it ought to be: And by voluntary Acts of this Nature he preserves a Power over himself, and is much the more fitted for all the Accidents of Life, and for the Exercise of Devotion.

But let a man have a care that he keep within due Bounds: He may exceed and transgress both in the *Measure*, and in the *End and Design* of such Mortification. He exceeds in the *Measure* of it, when he inflicts such Severity on himself as shall render him unfit for the Service of God, and useless in his Place. God delights not in the Punishment of his Creatures, but desires their Good here as far as it is consistent with their greater Good hereafter. And though he requires Self-denial of us, it is only in such a measure as is for our Good, in order to the bettering of our Temper, and to cut off the Occasions of Sin in us. And therefore it is a great fault in any man on this pretence to render his Life so unequal to himself, as that he shall not be able to serve God

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contentedly, cheerfully, and without Distraction : As a Man may be to blame also for his Charity, when without a just Occasion he throws, or gives away all ; For if this Course were allowed or followed, the worst People, and they that know least how to use an Estate well, would be the richest and Owners of all, and the only persons in Authority and Power.

And he transgresseth also in the *End and Design* of such Severity, when he pretends to merit by it, and hopes to buy Heaven (which is the Gift of God) with a few Lashes, or a little Money.

And I have too much reason to undervalue and dislike the Severity of the *Monks* on both these Accounts. They often tie themselves up to such Degrees of Strictness as are above the Measures of a man, and consequently not to the purpose of Religion and Devotion. And they *always* design to purchase Heaven for themselves or other, by the Merits of such Sufferings : At the same time undervaluing the Sufferings of Christ, and over-valuing their own ; and yet making them of less worth in God's Esteem than else they would be, by their own setting so high a price upon them.

And besides all this, their insisting so strictly on these pieces of Austerity, and placing such Religion and Perfection in them, is of very ill Consequence to other purposes.

It makes men to acquiesce in the *means* as the *end*, to content themselves with having performed their Fasts, their Number of Prayers and Lashes, without ever aiming at any Reformation and Change of Temper and Practices ; than which nothing can be more absurd in it self, or more contrary to the Design of Christianity.

It makes men also to esteem this or that kind of Meat and Drinke, Condition or Course of Life, to be unlawful or sinful, which really is not ; which doth much harm, even to Religion : For it disparageth God's Creation and

and brings an *evil Report* upon the Land. It necessarily makes Men querulous and censorious; and is the very thing which our Saviour took such pains to correct, and did so often rebuke the *Pharisees* of his Time for.

And this extraordinary pretence to Severity, brings the Persons of such Men into Esteem, whatever their Principles, Opinions and Practices otherwise are, and so injures Religion. For so *Ecclesiastical History* tells us, That those *Hereticks* that have most hurt the Church, were such kind of pretended mortified Men, as *Montanus*, *Pelagius*, &c. So that what do these more than others? Do not even the *Publicans* say?

And therefore however praise-worthy the *Monastick* Life may have been formerly, and whatever good may have been done, by some of that Order: Yet this is no Plea for the *Monks* at this time. For the *Ancients* were very Instrumental in converting many to Christianity; but these only live on the spoil of Christians already made so. And considering the present posture of Affairs in the World, this *Monkish* way of living is very improper, and the abuses that are made of it in the Church of *Rome*, are plainly intollerable. Where Men are taught to place Religion in a certain Way and Trade of Life, rather than in a truly Christian Conversation. It strikes at the very Foundation of our Religion; for Men to be made to believe, that the living or dying in the Habit of this or that severe Order of *Monks*, will have an Influence on the Soul, and give it a better Title to Heaven. And yet it is too notorious that these things are confidently taught and believed among them.

In short, let Men deny themselves as much as they will, for the sake of God and of Religion, to humble themselves for their Sins, and to keep their Bodies and Passions under. Let them use their Christian Liberty to the restraint of themselves, by a voluntary self-deny-

al, as far as they find it necessary or expedient ; But for this to be brought into a trade, is the most preposterous thing in the World. Especially, let them have a Care of censuring and judging others, who tread not exactly in their Steps, or of over-valuing themselves, on account of this severe and strict course of Life. For it is evident that for the most part it is not Religion brings them thither, or any extraordinary love of Devotion ; but their Parents send them thither as a pretty cheap way of providing for their younger Children, that so they may be able the more honourably to dispose of the rest agreeably to the Grandeur of the Family. Therefore if they will commend the Institution of Monasteries, as a good and frugal way of breeding up of Youth, or of providing for a spare Child or two, let them do what they will. But it is not to be suffered, that when they serve especially, or only to such Politick ends ; yet that they should be boasted of as the best, or only Christian and Religious way of Life, as if the Persons in them were the only *Religious*, and all others were *secular*, and in some Measure *Profane*.

Besides it is very *unreasonable* for Persons to be shut up in Monasteries, so as they are, when they are young, and before they can have fully considered what Temptations they may have, or how they shall be able to bear and withstand them ; and yet if they have but once, though of a sudden, through their own Melancholly, or the Insinuation of others, take the vow on themselves, there is ordinarily no revoking or drawing back for ever.

It is very *cruel* also for Persons to be put there, without any Consideration of their several Tempers, and Circumstances. For instead of benefiting the Publick, which they pretend, it robbeth the World of many an one that would have been useful to it in an Active Life and Station. And some by their Tempers do not need such



such Mortification, as the melancholly and dejected. Others cannot bear the Strictness and Confinement, the weak and sickly. And now to force this same course of Life on all, or such a number of Men, indifferently, is like the Cruelty of that Tyrant that would make all men of the same length: And the best that can be said in the case, is, that the Persons who thus confine and shut up their Children and Relations, are like to the Persecutors, who in the like manner shut up St. *Cyprian*, which certainly was Cruelty in them, tho by so doing, they gave him a greater Opportunity for private Devotion. So that in truth I look on the Monasteries, as they are now ordered, to be rather a kind of Prisons, and places of Punishment, than convenient places of Retirement in order to the freer and more undisturbed Exercise of Religion and Devotion. And if I am not mistaken, the Church of *Rome* her self, whatever she pretends, really thinks so of them: For the worst Punishment that she inflicts on a Priest for one of the worst of Offences, *viz.* for his violating the Seat of Confession, is, that he shall be condemned to be shut up in a Monastery; and I dare say, that he and I agree in thinking that to be a severe Punishment, rather than an Helpto Devotion.

*Secondly*, And if the Multitude of Monasteries in the Church of *Rome* is no certain Sign of Devotion flourishing among them, they have little reason to boast of their *works of Charity*: For it is most plain, that the biggest part of their Charity is turned this way, to the building and endowing Monasteries, and to the Encouragement of the Monastick way of living.

But besides this, though I am very loth to find fault with any pretence to Charity, yet I have too much reason on many accounts to think very meanly of all that which is practised in the Church of *Rome*: For whatever hath been given to that Church under the Name of

*Charity*, and is now enjoyed by it, hath for the most part been ill gotten, and is as ill employed.

And here I will not treat of the temporal Power of the Pope himself, and of the several Principalities which he stands possessed of in *Italy* and *France*; for they cannot be ranged under the Head of *Charity*, according to my acception of the Word; though it might be easily made to appear, that they have generally been gotten by unjust and unlawful, or at best by harsh and cruel Means, and such as one would not expect from the Successor of *St. Peter*. But I concern myself with smaller and more private Benefactions and Gifts, though these are so considerable, that generally a third part, often half the Lands of a Country are the Propriety of the Church. Now all this is gotten chiefly from men that are dying, who can keep their Riches no longer, and therefore who do not so much give this from themselves as from their Heirs; and is especially, as it were, to buy Heaven; and a man must have a most despicable esteem of Heaven, who will not give all the good things of this Life, when he can no longer use or enjoy them, for the Purchase of it: And what is given from so bad a Principle, is commonly applied to as bad a purpose. It is a common Observation, that in all the Popish Countreys the Poor are the most miserable in the World; and their Secular Priests too are generally in a sad Condition, notwithstanding the infinite Riches of that Church: And so the Regulars only have any considerable advantage by them; and they also, as it were, club together to set up one great Man as Cardinal, or Head of their Order, in mighty Pomp and State; and heap Riches and Preferments on him till he can hardly bear them. So that one can scarcely suppose so great Riches as that Church is in common endowed with, to be gotten into fewer Hands, or do less Good than it doth amongst them.

them. Let them not therefore boast of their *Charity*, whilst amidst so great *Plenty*, they suffer the Poor to want so extremely; and yet to make a *Show* build a fine Hospital in two or three of their chief *Towns*: For perhaps no where in the *World* do the *Rich* more exalt themselves, and tyrannize over the *Poor*, no where is there a greater inequality of *Conditions*; no where is there so much given to the Church and *Charity*, and no where is the *Estate* of the Church engrossed into so few *Hands*, to maintain *Grandeur*, rather than to be a *Relief* to *Poverty*. For the *Cardinals* above *Seventy* in number are maintained out of the *Church-Revenues*, and yet are by their *Creation* equal to *Kings*, and superior to *Princes*. Now if this be *Charity* to have a prodigious *Revenue* for the *Maintenance* of the Church and *Poor*, and yet to employ this to the *Luxury* of a few, and to let the rest perish, I will acknowledge the Church of *Rome* to be the most charitable Church in the *World*. And if it be said that a great deal indeed hath been given to good and truly charitable uses, but is now perhaps misemployed: I answer, it is possible it may be so, yet still I have some reason to question it; For their *Doctrines* of *Merit*, and of buying *Souls* out of *Purgatory*, &c. are enough to spoil their works of *Charity*, and make them to be rather esteem'd a *Bargain* of *Sale* than a *free Gift*. And yet their *Donations* run commonly in this *Form*, *I give this to such a Monastery for the good of my Soul, or of the Souls of other persons deceased, or for the Honour of such a Saint*; but seldom for the good of the *Poor*, the *Maintenance* and *Support* of true *Piety* and *Religion*; or for the *Glory* and *Honour* of *God*: And yet in my *Opinion* such as these are the only ends for which a *Gift* ought to be esteem'd *charitable*, or will be accepted by *God* as such.

But now on the other side, though the Church of *England* own not either *Purgatory*, or any other of their Pick-pocket Doctrines, yet *Charity* urged by us from truly Christian Principles, hath had more force, and done more good than all their Tricks and Devices put together: For so Dr. *Willet* hath in part shewn; and it might be more fully demonstrated, that in these last 120, or 130 Years, since the settling of the Reformation among us, there hath been more and greater *Churches*, *Schools* and *Hospitals* built and endowed, better Provision made for the Poor; more and better care taken, not only for the Maintenance, but especially for the Instruction of the ignorant and meaner sort of People; In short, all parts of *Charity* more fully exercised, than can be shewn in any the like number of Years since Christianity came into this Countrey. Indeed the general Strain of our Peoples *Charity* runs to the doing of more good, and is more properly expressed than theirs is. The *Papists* build Monasteries, in which Provision is made for a few people to live in Idleness and Luxury under pretence of Devotion and Retirement: Ours relieve the Sick and Needy (tho not Regulars) and think it better *Charity* to preserve a poor Family from starving (of which so many thousands die in Popish Countreys) than to maintain an idle *Monk* or *Nun*, or to make a Present to the Lady at *Loretto*, or offer Candles and Tapers to the Image, or Saint of the Town in which we live. We, by so bestowing our *Charity*, both honour God, and do good to Men. They do neither, but do Homage to a Saint that neither knows them, nor receives any Good by the Honour which they give them.

It is indeed confessed, that our Churches are not so adorned as they ought sometimes: But that is no Fault of our Church, but of the Iniquity of the Times, and of those Dissentions which they raise among us; but generally.

nerally they are decently grave, and as well fitted to assist a devout mind without Distraction as can be. We love to have our Churches neat and handsom, to shew we do not grudge whatever may be required to make them in some measure a fit place for Divine Worship; but we see not any necessity of having them so splendidly rich and fine; we think it would rather divert mens minds from the Business of the Place, than assist them in the Duties of it.

In short, in no part of *Charity* can they pretend to exceed us, considering our Circumstances, unless it be in that of Prayer for the Dead, when they hire so many Masses to be said for them; but we think not this so much *Charity* to the person deceased, as to the Priest; for he doubtless receives most Benefit from it.

*Thirdly*. And whatever they pretend, the great number of Saints canonized and commemorated among them, is neither a Sign of their good State and Condition of their Church, nor is their keeping so many Holydays in remembrance of them any instance of true Devotion.

As for many of the Saints which they commemorate we own as well as they, and can pretend as good a right in them as they can, because we own, and will submit to whatever can be urged from them; such are the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles and Evangelists; and after them also the Bishops, Martyrs and Confessors in the Primitive Church: But we confess that we have not the same esteem of many whom they commemorate as Saints, and utterly disallow of their Canonizing or Sainting of them: For many of them (I believe) never had any Being, but in the Fancy of these Saint-makers, who yet are commemorated, and prayed to as well as any others. Such are St. *Longinus*, under which name they have made a Man of the Spear which pierced our Saviour's Blessed Body.

Body. St. *Almachius*, on Jan. 1. which only comes from the Corruption of *Almanack*; St. *Amphibalus*, who was only St. *Alban's* Cloak; St. *Ursula*, and her 11000 Virgins, of whom no Foot-steps can be found in true History. Many of them, I fear, it had been better that they had never been, as being notoriously vicious and scandalous in their Lives. And others, though more innocent, yet if we believe what is written in their Lives, were so prodigiously ridiculous, that a wise and religious man would be ashamed of such Company. To hear Men in an Extasie of Devotion to talk Nonsense, or to preach to Birds and Beasts, to run naked, to wander voluntarily in Desarts, &c. is more likely with sober men, to bring their Persons and Actions into Contempt and Scorn, than to affect them with any quick Sense of Religion; at best it will excite Men only to that extatical and enthusiastical kind of Devotion, which was in vogue among the Heathens, whose Priests were besides themselves, when they spake in the Name of their Gods; and their most celebrated Exercises of Religion were such kind of irrational Actions; but there is nothing of this at all countenanced under Christianity. For the Gospel would make us wise as well as devout; and it is not required that we put off the Man, but the Old Man and its Vices when we become Christians.

And though we are sensible of many among us that have been very exemplary for Vertue and Piety, and have no reason to doubt of their Salvation; but have as full Assurance of it, at least, as they have of their Saints; yet we are very shy of canonizing or fainting of them, because we know not Mens Hearts, nor dare we to presume to dispose so absolutely of Heaven as the Pope doth. We thank God for those that have lived and died well among us, and exhort our people to imitate all the Good which shewed it self in them; but

but we know not to what purpose Canonization is. If it be only to recommend their Vertues to Example, the Canonization of them will signifie no more than the bare History of their good Lives faithfully recorded would do; but if it be in order to praying to them we utterly condemn it. And it is too plain, that this is the end of their being canonized: For from that time solemn Prayer and Invocation is allowed and offered up to them. And this I believe hath been an occasion of their falling from the Truth of Christian Doctrine as well as Practise: For they taking such a man to be a Saint, think themselves obliged to follow and vindicate whatever he either did or said, as holy and true, not considering that the best of meer Men have been guilty of Mistakes and Imperfections; and then much more may we suspect the Judgment and Understanding, the Vertue and Piety of many of those that fill up the bigger part of the *Romish* Kalendar.

And for the same reason we think there is not much Religion or Devotion expressed in the keeping up the Memory of such Saints, by so many Holydays observed among them.

If they commend their Holydays for the opportunities afforded in them of serving God in publick, we have such Conveniencies in many places every day.

If they commend them as days set apart to Rest and Idleness, we are not altogether of their mind; for we think we have as many as our Poor can well spare; and are sure that they have more Holydays than their Poor can afford to observe. So that their Holydays are no Advantage to any. The Rich need them not; because if they have Abilities, they may be idle and luxurious every day: But they are a great Evil and Burthen to the Poor, when they are forced to lose so many days from their Work, by which they should maintain themselves and their Families. And though the Popes, by reason of this Cry of the Poor, have been prevailed

prevailed with to cut off many of those days of Idleness, yet still in most places the Number of them is intolerable.

*Fourthly*, As for Images, I should have thought it more proper to range them among the *Hinderances* of Devotion, did I not see the Men of *Rome* to plead earnestly for them, as *Helps* and *Assistances*, and to blame us for not using them, and paying no respect to them.

I confess my self not acute enough to discern how they can any ways advance Devotion: For their paying such Honour and Respect to them *as they do own* and acknowledge, must needs be a great Distraction, it diverting the Mind, and making Men spend their religious Reverence on that which is exposed to their View: but their paying such Worship to them *as they do pay, but are ashamed to own*, is flatly destructive to all true Devotion.

They indeed plead the Ignorance of the People for the necessity of Images, and call them the Books of the Unlearned: But they must *first* suppose their People insufferably ignorant to need such Helps as these are. And to give the Priests their due, if any Ignorance would suffice to justify such a Practice, they take care to keep their People in Ignorance sufficient: And *then* if they are so ignorant that they cannot worship God without an Image, the Church cannot be secure, but these so silly People may worship the Image for God or Christ; or at least as having some extraordinary Vertue in it, and so make an Idol of it, especially when they see the Eyes and Hands of the Image to move, and see Miracles wrought by the Touch of it, as is frequently pretended and believed to be done: So that either there is no need of Images, or great danger in the use of them.

I confess, I am not of Mr. *Baxter's* Mind, who thinks that they may be properly or safely used to excite Devotion; at least I must confess my self of a different temper



per from him. Methinks I represent God in greater Majesty to my self, when I consider him in his Works of Creation and Providence, than to see him pictured, as in the Clouds, though with Thunder in his Hand. And my Saviour appears more lovely to my mind and thoughts when I consider him as coming into the World and dying for us, than when I see him pictured and carved on a Crucifix. For it is more useful to see him with the Eye of Faith than of Sense; and it is not the Proportion of his Body represented to my Eyes, but the Dignity of his Nature, the Love that he bore me, and the Passions of his Soul for me, that I admire most, and which no Pencil can draw.

Besides, a Picture or Image tells me nothing but what I knew before; and it is by what I knew before that I can make sense or any devout use of this Picture; for else I might take it for another profane and idle Story. And I would fain know whether the reading considerably the 26, and 27th. Chapters of *S. Matthew* will not affect any pious Heart much more than the seeing and contemplating a Picture. Certainly if this will affect the Sense and bodily Passions, the other will more work on our Reason, and that will be to better purpose. Nay, the seeing of any Picture often will naturally make it *familiar*, and not at all affecting to us.

5. And if the severity of the *Monks* to their Bodies is not any great Sign of *Devotion*, much less can the Austerities used by the common People turn to any great Commendation of the Church. It is true, they are forced to keep Fasts, but it would make a Man laugh to read how their Casuists have defined concerning the *modus*, the Measure and End of Fasting. *Escobar* hath resolved it, "That no Drink breaks a Fast, be it Wine or Chocolat; and because it is not wholefom to drink without eating, you may eat two Ounces of Bread :

“ For that is but a quarter of a Meal; and if a man should  
 “ chance to break his Vow of Fasting thus, he is not bound  
 “ to fast another day for it, unless on a new Obligation:  
 “ And if all this be too hard, you may be dispensed with  
 “ for your whole Life, and that whether there be any just  
 “ cause for it or no. Nay, Servants, tho they eat ne-  
 “ ver so gluttonously of the Scraps, they break no Fast.  
 Indeed there need be no Rules set down concerning the  
 Poor Peoples observing Fasting Days: They are kept  
 low enough without them: And as for the Rich, their  
 Fasting is Mock-fasting, to fast to Luxury, with Wine,  
 and Fish, and Sweet-meats. Is not this great Self-de-  
 nial? If any therefore are still truly mortified, when  
 they can thus help it, I must rather commend their own  
 Piety, and devout Temper, than the Rules and Orders  
 of their Church, which give so much Liberty, that a  
 man must have a very cross-grain'd Appetite, or be in  
 the highest degree sensual, not to be willing to comply  
 with it. We find then no Fault with Fasting being en-  
 joyn'd, and at set Seasons: For we our selves commend  
 and practise it; but let it not be to play tricks, but for  
 true and real Mortification, and for the proper Ends of  
 Mortification, to humble the Body to the Soul, and to  
 bring the Mind to a better Temper; and to these  
 ends is Fasting commanded by our Church; but not  
 as if we looked on this or that kind of Meat to be  
 unholy, or design'd to purchase Heaven by our Absti-  
 nence, as the Church of *Rome* doth. .

6. And as for their Pilgrimages, and Worship of Re-  
 liques, they must needs have less pretence to Religion:  
 For their Fasts, and other Austerities somewhat resem-  
 ble true Christian Duties; but these have no Show that  
 way. If Pilgrimage be enjoyn'd for *Penance*, then there is  
 no Thanks due to the Person performing it.

If it be *voluntary*, there is no true Devotion in it : For the Worth of it must consist in some of these Reasons, *viz.* either, First, That God is more present, or Secondly, more propitious in one publick place of Worship than another : both which are contrary either to the Nature of God, or his Declaration in Scripture, when he says, *In every place a pure Offering shall be offered to him,* Mal. 1. 11. And *Where ever two or three are gathered together in Christs Name, he is in the midst of them:* Matt. 18. 20. And the teaching otherwise is in some measure to revive *Judaism*, which allowed God, as to some cases, to be served acceptably only in one place ; or Thirdly, That the *Saint* is more present or propitious here than any where else : But we are speaking of Devotion to God, not to the Saint ; or Fourthly, That it is their *punishing themselves* that is so acceptable ; but that hath been sufficiently discarded already : Or, Fifthly, That going so far, and taking such pains is a *Sign of their Love* : But a man may shew his Love to God, and to his Saint too by more proper Instances, and do more good by it, which God, to be sure, will better accept, and the Saint, if he be a Saint, will like as well. And therefore the making such account of Pilgrimages, seems rather to favour the *Mahometan*, than the *Christian* Religion : For the going on Pilgrimage to *Mecca*, is one of the five indispensable points of the Mahometan Superstition.

And as for the *Veneration of Reliques*, all the World knows, what a Cheat is put on Men, in vending any old rotten Bone, or piece of Cloth, &c. for a Relique of this or that Saint : So that according to a moderate Computation, I suppose scarcely one in a hundred is true : And some have pleaded they need not be true. Now whatever Devotion is performed to, or on occasion of these Reliques, can be commendable only in regard of the Mind and devout Temper of the Person ; which I think

might as acceptably shew it self in any other proper time and place: And there is required a long *Series* of Consequences before the Sight of *St. Joseph's Axe*, or any such other of their Reliques, can be pretended to raise a man's Devotion. But it being the chief Trade at *Rome* to sell feigned pieces of Antiquity, and other such worthless Trinkets at a high rate, I the less wonder, that they have such an Esteem for Reliques; for it is for their profit to keep up the Value of them, they being the principal Commodities of the place.

7. And the Belief which they have of the *Saints bearing them*, and their Practise of *praying to them*, is no proper Encouragement or Instance of true Devotion: For all *Devotion* is properly towards God; and therefore the making Addresses to any other cannot possibly have any direct Tendency to exalt our Devotion to him, but is really a great hindrance: For it takes mens Minds off from God, and sets them on his Creature: And the same time that is spent in Prayer to them, surely is better spent in praying to God, who is more present with us, hears us better, and loves us more. And Men's going to Saints when God is present, naturally tends to provoke God's *Jealousie*: For he declares himself *jealous* as to his Worship particularly, to set them up in Competition with God, and to create in Men an *Opinion*, that they are more easily entreated, and readier to do us a Kindness than he is. And therefore though Men may *fear* God more, yet they will rather love the Saint; and Love is the truest Motive to such Devotion, as will be best accepted with God. And yet in this plainly consists all that Court which they make to the Virgin *Mary*, that she would *pacifie the Anger* of God the Father, or of the Son towards Men; they are represented severe, and almost cruel, to render her more amiable to the people in her interceding for them: So they frequently in  
their

their printed allowed Books of Devotion, call her *Fountain of Mercy, and Pity*, and other Names of the like Importance. Now all the assurance they have of her being so tender and compassionate, is only because she is a Woman; but they are assured of God's Mercy, both from his Nature and his Word: They have no Assurance that she, or any other Saint hears them; nor can they shew how the Saint can be rationally supposed to know every thing that we do or say; but they are well assured that God hears them: For he is stiled *The God that beareth Prayer*; which Prerogative of his, by every Prayer to a Saint, they may at least suspect that they intrench on. They are not assured that the Saint can help them; but they may be fully satisfied of his Help, who is Almighty. They have no Encouragement from Scripture for praying to Saints: For though the Angels rejoyce at the *Repentance of a Sinner*, it doth not follow that therefore every concern of Men is known, or Prayer heard by them; much less that we may pray to them for the Gift of Repentance, or any other Grace. And Prayer being so considerable a part of Divine Worship, we need not doubt but the Angels and Saints would refuse it: For so St. John was rebuked for offering to worship the Angel, though supposed immediately and visibly with him, *Worship God*, Rev. 19. 20.

So that if they prayed to Saints and Angels only to *mediate and intercede* for them to God, it is more than they have any Warrant or Allowance for. Christ being always represented as the Mediator between God and man; and the setting up his Servants in his Office, is as far as is possible a deposing of him. Nor is it in this case, as it is in Courts on Earth (which is their common Excuse) where a Favourite is made use of to represent our Cause and our Request to the King: For this is done because our Kings do not know our Persons, nor understand our Case,  
nor.

nor can they be present in all places; and hear all Causes themselves: So that it is often necessary that Princes should employ and trust other than their own Eyes and Ears. Many things they think below them to enquire particularly into; and sometimes they will do that at the Request of a Favorite, which they would not do for the sake of a Person that is not particularly known to them. But there is no Room nor Occasion for this in the Court of Heaven: For God is not only intimately known, but is immediately present to all his Creatures; as he hath declar'd himself no Respector of Persons, but to love all, and therefore there is no need of any Intercessor for us, except the Lord Jesus; he affects not empty Pomp and State; but his Providence extends to every particular Concern of the meanest of all his Creatures; and though he may give some undeserved Favours, as longer Lives, and further Opportunities of Amendment, &c. for the sake of others Prayers, yet no Man is so far his Favorite, as to be able to persuade him to reverse his own Laws, and to save a wicked Person that continues in his Wickedness. On all which Accounts there is no Occasion of praying to the Saints so much as to *intercede* for us, as the Church of *Rome* pretends. But to pray to them to *bless us*, and *give us* this or that Temporal or Spiritual Good, as they of the Church of *Rome* practise; and to suppose them to have Power to help us in this or that particular Difficulty and Distemper is plainly intolerable: For this is in a great measure to revive Heathenism, by which Men worshipped this or that God for this or that particular Case. They must grant the Saint to have, though not an Original, yet a most certain and derivative Power, according to which he will not fail to assist them that worship him; and in all such Prayer, methinks they even terminate their Worship on the Saint: For if I pray to a Saint to help me in this—  
or

or that Difficulty, with a full assurance that this Saint hath sufficient Power to help me, though I should grant that this Saint received this Power from God, yet my Prayers terminate on the Saint. Indeed the Saint is obliged to God for that Power; but I seem to own my self only obliged to the Saint, for his applying this his general Power to my particular Case: Just as I am obliged to a man for giving me an Estate, though he is beholden to the Government and Laws, that either he enjoyed that Estate himself, or was empowered to give it to another.

Besides, that they often pray to Saints for such things, which, if they be only Creatures, they can have no power to give, or to be even so much as the Instruments of conveying to us; and yet it is notorious, they pray sometimes to the Saints for Grace, for Pardon of Sins, and strength against them. So in *Bonaventure's Psalter*, translated into Italian, and published for the use of the people, tho the Translator and Publisher says, that he had purged it from the Blasphemies which were in the former Editions; yet we find such passages as these to the Virgin Mary, Psal. 7. *Come to her all ye that are heavy laden, and she shall give Rest and Refreshment to your Souls.* Psal. 40. *Cleanse my Heart.* Psal. 41. *Thou art the beginning and the end of my Salvation.* Psal. 44. *By thy Holiness my sins are purged, and by thy Integrity, Incorruptibility is given to me.* Psal. 104. *Eternal Salvation is in thy Hand, O Lady, and he that worthily honoureth thee shall obtain it; and many more Sayings of this nature, or worse, if possible.* Now can any man say, that such Prayers as these are fit to be offered up to a Creature, or that they are Instances of the Devotion of a Christian, when they are so offered? I am sure that we charge the Heathen with giving Di-

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Salmi di S. Bonav.  
in Lode della Virgi-  
ne, per Giovan. Bat-  
tista Pirello. In Ge-  
noa, Anno 1606.

vine Worship to *Men*, though we can hardly find any Expressions or Prayers to their Gods, which are so high, and argue their terminating their Worship on them so fully as these, and other such, which are commonly used by those of the *Church of Rome* to Saints, and especially to the Virgin *Mary*.

8. And whatever they pretend, the constant Trade which they make of *Confessions and Penances*, and their Doctrine concerning them, is so far from encouraging Devotion, that it is enough to remove all true Devotion out of the World, if the Providence of God did not miraculously interpose.

For though they be very constant in their Confessions of all their Sins to a Priest, yet the frequency of it in themselves and others, makes them not so much as ashamed of themselves; and though they may be more afraid of angring their Priests, yet they have no reason to abhor themselves, or their Sins in the Sight of God any more for it.

And when they have thus confessed, their Confessor may enjoin what Penance he pleaseth, or else may leave it to the Penitent's own Choice, as *Escobar* from *Suarez*, affirms; and men are not used to be very cruel to their own Bodies, or lay a very severe Penance on themselves, when a lighter will serve: Or else the Confessor may say thus, "I impose on thee for Penance whatever good thing thou hast done, or shalt do this Day, or this Week, or whatever Evil thou hast, or shalt suffer. And Cardinal *Tolet* is of the same mind too. Now will not this make a man mightily afraid of sinning any more, when his ordinary course of Conversation, and the unavoidable Casualties of Life shall be turned into a sufficient Penance, Satisfaction, and Punishment for his Sin? And if the Confessor enjoin no Penance at all, indeed he is to blame, says *Escobar*; but still it is a Sacrament for



For all that, because a satisfactory penance is not an *essential* part of the Sacrament, but an *Integral*,

But if after all this the Confessor will impose a Penance, the Penitent may perform what he will of it: For, says *Tolet*, if he doth not perform his Penance, his Absolution stands good, only when he comes to Confession next, he must confess that he did not perform his penance, and so his Non-performance of penance will pass away in the Crowd of his other Sins, and there is an end of it. And if this please them not, there is an easier way still, if need be: For you may get another man to do your penance for you. Is not this a fine easie way to Heaven, when the fasting and starving of the Poor may be made to serve for a satisfaction for the Sins and Debauchery of the Rich? Indeed *Escobar* from *Suarez*, says, There ought to be a *just Cause* for one's performing penance for another: But here the other Distinction will help them, *non ad valorem, sed ad justitiam requiritur causa*, the penance is valid, though there be no just Cause. And whether there be a *Cause* or no, it is not doubted, says *Escobar*, but one may perform the penance for another, if the *Confessor will give leave*: And it is to be hoped there are some good natur'd Confessors to be found: But good

Cardinal \* *Tolet* is more free and generous than *Escobar* himself in this point: For he tells the Confessor, *That he must impose a lighter Penance, if he sees the Penitent will not perform a harder,* without ever telling the Penitent, that this *lighter* will not serve his turn, or without ever putting him in mind of his Danger, or of the necessity of a *harder* penance; and wholly commits it to the prudence of one Priest to diminish the penance which another had imposed, without so much as once telling him, that perhaps this penance will not suffice. So that in plain terms, by Consequence, he resolves it all into the power of the Priest; and nei-

\* *Tolet* Instruct. Sacerd. Lib. 3. c. 11.

ther Confessor nor Penitent are any further accountable that I perceive, if too slight a penance be enjoyned, the Sin is pardoned notwithstanding. And lastly, he goes on, and shews, that though the Penitent be enjoyned to perform his penance in his own person, yet he may transfer this to another, *without his Confessor's leave*; and yet he shall obtain the *satisfactory* part of penance, though not the *meritorious*, that is, he *shall be excus'd from suffering* evil; but shall not *merit* much at God's Hands by such penance. And indeed I think he is very unreasonable if he expect more: And besides all this, the design of all penance being only to satisfy the Debt of Temporal punishment due to their Sins, there are several easie ways provided by their Church for the discharge of it, besides the severe penance, as e. g. several short Prayers, to the saying of which some scores of thousands of years pardon are annexed, *toties quoties*; there are large Indulgences granted at *Jubilees*, and at several other good Times; and may at any time be had for a good Sum of Money; And if a man take no Care of himself all his Life, yet if he can purchase Prayersto be said for him after his death, it will serve as well. And though the Penance be never so easie, and be performed as triflingly, yet the Absolution, by which they suppose the Debt of eternal punishment is discharged, must be as compleat and full as possible: For so the afore-named Cardinal, with a great deal of Concern, takes Care that the Absolution be not pronounced *conditionally*, as e. g. on condition that you *amend your Life, or perform your penance, &c.* but it must be pronounced absolutely, without any *if or and, thus, I absolve thee, &c.*

Now would not any one think, that the Church of Rome, by this Method of Confessions and Penances so taught and practised among them, rather designs to find out the Temper and Inclinations of people, and to dive  
into

into the Councils of great Men, or to answer some other such politick End, than to advance piety towards God, or Amendment of Life in the Penitent? I am sure they can have no hearty respect for *Devotion*, when they are taught to look on their Prayers to God, as a severe Penance; and yet which they may be released from by winning a Game at Cards, as is too commonly known.

9. And their Doctrine concerning the *Merit of good Works* and *Supererogation*, as it is false, so we cannot look on it as any Encouragement to Devotion; for God will not be served with a Lye.

I confess, if what is required of Men in their *Confession* and *Penances* be enough to save their Souls, they may very easily do more than is required: For they cannot do less, if they do any thing, though indeed one would wonder, that any that consider the Nature of the Gospel, or the Words of our Saviour, should ever pretend to *supererogate*.

But supposing their Doctrine to be true in these points, they cannot be thought to advance Devotion, but rather hinder it: For seeing it is somewhat natural for a Man to love his own Ease, every one will be apt to argue with himself, that so many have *merited* already, that there is no need of what he can do. Nay, it is Folly for him to attempt it: For what need he endeavour to add to a Stock of Merit, which is already infinite, as some have thought?

And indeed it had need be infinite, else it is to be feared, it is almost, if not quite spent, especially considering the vast Expence of these Merits in frequent *Jubilees*, and other Indulgences, the Multitude of Sinners, and the little extraordinary Vertue and Piety found among them at this day, to add to their Store: So that methinks it may justly be question'd whether they are not bankrupt

before now, their Disbursement so much exceeding their Receipts; and the Credit of their Bank seems to depend wholly on their *Old stock* of Merit which the Ancients laid up for them; and yet they grant that this was rather casual, than out of Design or good Nature: For the Saints design'd only to make sure of doing enough for themselves; and it seems that less served their turns than they thought of, and the rest was laid by for the use of such rich Sinners as the Church would sell it to. So that all this Stock of Merit, which the Church of *Rome* hath so great occasion for, and of which there is made so prodigious an Expence, is at the best but a Chance and spare-heap, which they cannot tell how they came by. (for every Bishop hath the same Title to such *Treasure-trove* that the Bishop of *Rome* hath,) nay, they have reason to fear there was never any such Treasure: (For I doubt not but the Saints in Heaven will thankfully own, that they have received more from God than they deserved, or could challenge: ) to be sure; they knew not how much there was ever laid up, nor whether the Stock be spent; and yet they spend as freely now, as if they had been only laying up till this time, and that the Treasure were now first opened.

Many other such Absurdities and unanswerable Difficulties there are in their Doctrine of *Merit*, and in their practise of applying these *Merits* to the use of others. And is it not a dismal thing, that the Priests of the Church of *Rome* should teach men to trust in, and as to Salvation, depend assuredly on these, of which they themselves have no manner of Assurance nor Ground to hope. Is not this to play with Men's Souls and Eternal Salvation? And especially can this be urged as an Encouragement of Devotion, when, if it were as true as it is false, it tends directly to make Men vicious, and to neglect *Devotion*: For so a Man will think if there be such a  
Stock.

Stock in the Church, why should not he have a Share of it as well as another? And if one can merit for another, why should not he depend on others, as well as, they on his *Merits*? And seeing Merits may be bought as the *Roman* Casuists have adjudged, he may think it very reasonable that other's Merits should be given him in exchange for his Money. So the Result of all is this, according to this Doctrine, and the supposed *Church-stock*, only one thing is needful, and that is *Money*; and this will fully make up all lack of *Piety* and *Devotion*.

10. And the belief of *Purgatory*, and of the validity of *Prayers for the dead*, is no proper Encouragement of true *Devotion*: For true *Devotion* is such as we perform to God, agreeably to his Will, when we know what we do, and for what ends, and have a promise or hope of Success; but when a man prays to God to deliver a Soul out of *Purgatory*, he must suppose as true several things, which are either false, or at least very uncertain; so that he can never pray in *Faith*, or without great perplexity and distraction of mind; for he knows not whether there be any such place or state as *Purgatory*: For Scripture says nothing of it, nor the Fathers of the three or four first Centuries. He knows not whether the Soul that he prays for be in *Purgatory* ( if there should be such a place ) for it may be in Heaven or in Hell, for ought he can tell. And if the Soul be in *Purgatory*, he knows not whether it be Useful or Lawful to pray for it; for God hath given us neither Command, nor Encouragement, nor Liberty so to do, Nay, there are several particulars which they themselves cannot agree on concerning *Purgatory*, viz. What Sins are promised there? How the Soul without its Body can be tormented there with a material Fire? Who are Gods Instruments in punishing the Souls there? For the Devils are not; and how the Pope by his Indulgences can apply the Satisfaction.

ctions of Christ and of the Saints so as to deliver any Soul out of *Purgatory*? And if there be such a place, the Pope himself by his Example doth enough to dishearten all Men from endeavouring to deliver the Souls of their Friends from thence: For it is not doubted but he can deliver all out of *Purgatory*, he having the Command of the Treasure of the Church. And it must needs be a wonderful Discouragement to a Devout Mind, that among so many hundred Popes, there should not be one found so Charitable as to release so many thousands of poor Souls that lye under intolerable pains, and so must lye till the last day, or till the debt of their temporal punishment be paid. If the Pope can do so much with so little Charge or Trouble to himself, and yet will not do it, surely I have less Reason to do any thing.

Nor doth it follow, that because it is a part of acceptable *Devotion*, for one Man to pray for another, whilst living here on Earth; that therefore it is as pleasing to God, for us to pray for Souls departed: For our Prayers for others on Earth, are either for Temporal Blessings, or for the *means of Grace*. We pretend not to desire God to reverse his own Laws, and save such a Man, let him be as bad as he will; but to make him *Holy* first, and then to make him *Happy*: And to Pray any otherwise for another Man, naturally tends to represent it as feasible to reconcile a wicked Life with the hopes of Heaven; but when a Man is dead he can Work no more, nor make any use of the *means of Grace*, and therefore there is no room for this Prayer to God for him, he is not capable of *Repentance, and Glory, and Amendment*, and of being made fit for Heaven.

Lastly, If they boast of the *validity of the Orders* of their Bishops and Priests, as an Encouragement to Devotion, the validity of the Sacraments dependig so much

much on the Legality of the Ministry ; We answer that we have a Clergy as properly and truly of Christ's sending as any Church in the World ; against whose Ordination and Mission nothing can be objected : We deriving the Succession of our Bishops, not only from their own *Austin* , but from the *British* Bishops before his time, which is the only Regular way of Mission, that we know of, except that of an extraordinary Commission from Heav'n as *St. Paul* had. And I would not that there were that to be objected against us, that is justly objected against them, as to the Succession of their Popes even since the Reformation began. For the Election of *Sixtus V.* was most notoriously Simoniackal, and yet one that comes by Simony into the Popedom, is by their own Canon Law, by the Bull or Constitution of *Julius II.* approved in the Council of *Lateran*, An. 1513. to be looked on as a *Magician*, *Heathen*, *Publican*, and *Arch-Heretic*, and his Election can never be made valid by any after Act, and yet several of the Popes since, were either made Cardinals by this *Sixtus V.* or received that Dignity from those that received it from him ; which is the very Case of this present Pope *Innocent Eleventh*.

Septimi  
Decretal.  
Lib. I.  
Tit. 3.

As for their *Unity*, it is plain that they have more divisions among themselves, then they can charge us with. For they have not only such as openly dissent and separate from them, but great and violent dissentions among their own Members, and such as live in the Communion of their Church, one against another, and each party pleads the Doctrine of the Church, and Decisions of its Councils. And yet the Pope himself, notwithstanding his *Infallibility* and *Authority*, either cannot or dare not determine which is in the Right, or which Opinion is True.

So that whatever *Power and Authority* their Church hath, it hath no good effect to such ends and purposes, to which Church-Power is designed to serve, the encouragement of Holiness and Vertue, and the discountenancing of Vice, the Preservation of the Doctrine in Purity, and of the Members at peace one with another. It is true they are more able to see the Laws of their Church Duly executed ; but it is to their disparagement to have so much Power, and yet to do so little good with it. As for us, we had rather deserve more than we have, then that it should be said that we have more power than we deserve. And whatever Power our Church wants, and whatever loss Religion suffers by this means, we justly Charge the Church of *Rome* with the guilt of it, who have made all Princes jealous, and affraid of all Church-Power, by their invading their temporal Rights under pretence of a Spiritual Jurisdiction.

In short, though somewhat may be said for the worst thing, and a very bad Cause may have a great deal pleaded in its Vindication, as we have seen in all the foregoing Helps and Instances of Devotion, which the Church of *Rome* boasts of ; yet if we consider them, they all in some respect or other come short of what they pretend to ; several of them being very improper, many plainly Nonsensical and Ridiculous ; they proceed from bad Principles, are done in an undue Manner and Measure, or to serve some bad end or design, or some such other way offend ; even the most secure Practices, which most resemble true Self-denial, are countenanced or enjoined rather to make a show, or to gratifie some Tempers, then to advance Devotion ; for excesses and over-actings are often Infirmities, and the effects of Weakness ; steddiness being the most certain sign of Strength, as the shaking Palsy is a Disease and Sign of Weakness, as well as the *Dead one*.



3. I now come to consider such things in the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of Rome, as tend directly to promote Debauchery of Manners, and Carelessness in Devotion.

I'll insist only on these few, among very many.

*First*, The unlimited Power which they ascribe to the Church, or to the Pope as Head or Monarch of it: For the People are taught that he can make null Duties that were made necessary by God, and make necessary what was not so before. The Consequence of which Doctrine is plainly this, that a Man may safely disobey and neglect the serving of God, if he pay but his due respects to the Pope. And yet their Casuists have defined that the Pope can dispense with Sins, or give leave to do things forbidden by the law of God, as well as pardon them when committed, as in the Dispensations with *unlawful Marriages*. And on the other side he can excuse them from doing what they are by their Duty to God bound to do, as in his Dispensations with *Vows* though made never so solemnly to God himself. That is, he can bind where God hath left us loose, and he can loose where God has bound us. Nay, a Superiour can give a *Dispensation* even when he doubteth whether it be lawful or no; *because in a doubtful case the milder side is to be taken*. And if the Reason ceaseth for which the Dispensation was given, yet the Dispensation doth not cease: Nay, a Dispensation may be granted where there is no Reason or Cause for it; and yet the Dispensation is valid notwithstanding. And not the Pope only, but every Bishop and Priest hath his Share of this Power, only there are some *reserved* and more profitable Cases, which *his Holiness* only can dispense in. And though I cannot tell what they *think*, yet I am sure their Casuists are very shy of *saying*, that there is any Case in which

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there

there may not be a *Dispensation* granted for the doing of it, or a Pardon for it when it is done.

And all Indulgencies are directly designed to hinder Devotion, for they are given to free Men from the Necessity of *Mortification, frequent Alms and Prayers, &c.* which else would have been enjoyned as Penance; and yet we know that these are the chiefest parts of Devotion.

And as their general Doctrine concerning the validity of Pardons and Indulgencies is very destructive of all true Piety and Religion: So,

*Secondly*, Their constant Practice of giving *Absolution before Penance*, is in a more especial manner influential to that purpose. For the People are taught to believe, that by the Priests saying, *I absolve thee, &c.* the Sin is actually pardoned by God: And though indeed their Guides of Confessors advise that Absolution should not be given till Penance be imposed and accepted; yet when the Confessor thinks that the Penitent will accept of the Penance, he may absolve him first: That is, the Person may be absolved before he accept the Penance, or even promise to perform it; but it is their constant Method to absolve him before Penance be actually performed.

Now if their Absolution be of force, the Person is free from his Sin, and sure enough of Heaven, whether he perform any Penance or no: Which Practice gives all imaginable Encouragement and License to Sin; the fear of Penance being the only restraint from Sin which they pretend to; but if the Sin be fully pardoned before Penance be accepted or performed: I see not why a man should trouble himself much for the performance of his Penance; he sees plainly that it is only an Appendix that is used to be annexed to Absolution, but is neither necessary in it self nor for Absolution; the Sin is pardon'd

pardon'd already, and at the worst there is only some temporal Punishment to be satisfied for, which he may get rid of several other ways.

Nay indeed the true and ancient Notion of Penance is utterly destroyed, by its being imposed and performed after Absolution. For Penance according to the Primitive use of it, was a severe course of Life prescribed to a Person that had grievously offended, as a proper Method for him, at the same time to testify his own sorrow for his Sin, and abhorrence of it, and to create in him an Aversion to the Like for the time to come; and also to satisfy the Church of all this, that he might be admitted to Absolution and the Communion: And therefore their Penances were always publick, and indeed it is by publick Penance only that all these so good ends can possibly be answered: But now in the Church of Rome, the Offender is pardoned without any thing of this, he is not put to any grief for his Sin before he be absolved. It is left wholly to his own Honesty and Gentleness whether he will perform any Penance for his Sin. Nay indeed so loath are they to appear severe against Sin, or Cruel to the Sinner; that when in the Council of Trent some would have revived this Discipline, by enacting publick Penance, they were violently opposed and over-ruled; tho St. Gregory a Pope of Rome had held it to be of Divine Right: and their Casuists since teach that a Confessor cannot, or ought not, enjoin a publick Penance: So that by this means a Man is not so much as to be put to the blush for his Sins; for no such Penance must be imposed by which the Sin may be known, and he is sure that the Confessor to save a Kingdom dare not reveal or discover it.

Thirdly, Their Doctrine concerning the Nature of several Sins, is such as must needs rather encourage Men to con-

tinue in Sin, than deliver us from it; and will spoil all true Devotion to God, and that due regard that we ought to have to his Commandments.

Escobar  
Tract. 2.  
Exam. 1.  
cap. 4.

They tell us there is a vast number of Sins in their own Nature *Venial*, which are so very inconsiderable that an infinite number of them altogether will not deprive a man of the Grace and Favour of God, or make up one Mortal Sin, and for the Pardon of which there is no need or occasion for the Mercy of God: And yet they have no certain Rules to discover whether a Sin be *Mortal* or *Venial*, so that men are in wonderful danger of being cheated in a matter of so great Moment as their Eternal Salvation.

Escobar  
Tract. 2.  
Exam. 1.  
cap. 2.

They tell us also, that an *Habitual Sin*, is only a Stain left by former voluntary Sins, and a Deprivation of habitual Goodness; but hath nothing else that is evil in it. From which Doctrine it necessary follows that a man is guilty only of those Sins which created this *Habit*, and that there is not an habitual Repentance, or Course of Life required to get pardon for habitual Sins, but a few or perhaps one single Act of Contrition will serve. So that the more a Man sinneth the better he may, and it is a piece of true Prudence to get an Habit of all Sin betimes; for a Man is accountable only for those Sins which preceded the Habit; all the Sins which follow it will pass under the name of *Inadvertencies*, and as such can be esteemed only as a kind of *Venial* Sins.

And they not only allow the Church Power to command what doth not belong to her in many Cases; but give such Authority to her Commands, as to make the Disobedience to them the greatest of all Sins, and make way for the breaking of the Laws of God, that they may keep those of the Church. So *Marriage* hath been adjudged a greater Sin in a Priest than *Fornication*, because the

the Priests are oblig'd to *Celibacy* by the Laws of the Church, and their own Vow; as if they were not by the Laws of God, and their Vow of Baptism more obliged to abstain from *Fornication*; and accordingly for *Marriage*, a Priest is excommunicated or deposed; but for *Fornication*, he is only obliged to confess it secretly among his other Sins; and the Guilt and Irregularity of it is done away by Absolution. Indeed they bring almost all Sins under the Head of *Discipline*, not only by pretending to give Pardon and Dispensations for most Sins that can be committed; but also when they compare Sins, they are always most earnest against such as transgress the Commands of the Church. So *v.g.* when *Escobar* asks the Question, *What if I communicate unworthily at Easter?* He answers, *That by so doing, I fulfil the Command of the Church, which is what I am immediately bound to:* And passeth over the Duty of Self-examination and Preparation so strictly enjoined by *St. Paul*, as not worthy to be considered: And so in innumerable other Cases; by which means indeed they create a great Veneration for the Church, or for that which they call the Church; but thereby make the Commands of God of none effect.

*Fourthly*, Their very Doctrine concerning their Prayers and Devotions, and their Practice consequent on it, is such as is altogether inconsistent with the Nature of true Devotion: For, according to the Church of Rome, the outward Act will suffice in many Cases, though nothing of the Mind go along with it; particularly as to Prayers *Escobar* from *Coninch* and *Durandus* affirms, that neither an actual, nor virtual Attention is required when a man prayeth; and they give an excellent Reason for what they say, *viz. Because the Church hath no Power in hidden Cases, but only in the Case of Auricular Confession:* As if in Prayer only the power of the Church and Obedience

dience to its Commands were to be regarded: And he confirmeth his Assertion with this other most cogent Comparison, That an outward Act of Devotion, or Prayer only with the Mouth, is a true Act of Prayer, tho without the Intention, as an outward Act of Adoration of an Idol, though without the Intention, is a true Act of Idolatry. So that for a man to mind what he doth when he is at Prayers, or to be earnest in his Desires of that which he prayeth for, though it may possibly be a Commendation, and Accomplishment, yet it is not necessary either to the pleasing of God, or satisfying of his Duty according to the Church of Rome. Nay, it is a praise for a man to *draw nigh with the Mouth, and honour him with the Lips, though the Heart be far from God*, notwithstanding that our Saviour, after the Prophet *Isaiab* blamed the *Jews* for so doing. Indeed such a kind of superficial Christians will this Doctrine make, that a *Pharisee* would have been an excellent Man, if he had lived in these days.

And pursuant to this Doctrine of the No-necessity of Attention at Prayers, they take care that the people shall not be able to attend to what is done; and therefore provideth that the *publick Prayers* and the *Scripture* it self shall be only in a *Language unknown* to the people, and are so desperately fond of this Device of keeping the people ignorant of what is prayed for, that their Casuists have defined, that a Man may say his Office privately in other Languages besides the *Latin*, as in *Hebrew*, or *Greek*, but not in the *Vulgar Language*; at the same time keeping the people in Ignorance, and discouraging them in their Devotions, and exercising their Authority over them in the most dangerous manner that can be.

6. Their ascribing spiritual Effects to several things which are purely of their own Invention, is much to the Discouragement of true Devotion towards God. And yet

yet they have very many things of this Nature: As *Holy Water*, by the being sprinkled with which, they believe the Devil shall have less power over them: *Agnus Dei's*, *Swords* and *Medals* which they wear to preserve them from Dangers; which being consecrated according to the Rules of their Church, have through the Devotion of the Persons, and the power of the Church, a wonderful good effect, though indeed God never promised any such thing.

To this Head I may refer also, their *Rosary*, which is nothing else but an odd Combination of *Pater-noster's* and *Ave Mary's*. Several *short Prayers* to the laying of which thousands of years of pardon of Sins are annexed: Their carrying the Image of St. *Gemvise* in Procession at *Paris*, and other Images in other Places to obtain Rain, &c. and innumerable other such like Practices, on which Men are taught to rely, and to expect great good by, though they have neither any natural force or efficacy that way; nor any assurance from God that such effects shall follow. Nay even the *Sacraments* themselves according to the Doctrine of the Church of Rome are only such a kind of *Charms*; for they are supposed to work effectually, on the Person, without any Devotion or Vertuous Disposition being required of him in order to it.

Now whatever effect they promise above what the natural efficacy of the thing is apt and able to produce, they must have express Authority from God; or else they sadly delude and cheat those poor Souls that depend upon them. And at the best they are supposed only a shorter cut to Heaven, an easier way of pleasing God and getting his Blessing, and are invented only to ease a Man of the fatigue and trouble of the common and ordinary road of serving him by a constancy and regularity of Devotions.

*Seventhly*, Their Manuals and Books of Devotion which they give their People to read, instead of the Scripture which they forbid to be used, though they may design them as *Helps*, yet I must range them among the *Hindrances of Devotion*.

For the best of them are so full of Tatologies and vain Repetitions, that they must needs come under the Censure of our blessed Saviour, *Matt. 6*, though they use his own holy Name. For so in the *Jesus Psalter*, at the end of the *Manual of Prayers and Litanies Printed at Paris in English*, An. 1682. in a Litany of fifteen Petitions, the Name *Jesus* is repeated over above 130 times. And in the same Book, in the *Litany of the blessed Virgin*, they pray to her by 40 several Names, being only so many distinct praises of her. And the like is observable in all their Books of Devotion which I ever saw. Now their saying the same thing so often over, is not contrived to help and assist Attention, or prevent Distraction, or as a Repetition of what is more than ordinary important, or for any other good and prudent Reason, but out of pure Vanity and Ostentation, or as it were even to flatter our blessed Saviour or the Saint which they pray to.

But most of the Books and Legends which they put into the hands of their People to excite their Devotion, and by which the People take an estimate of the Christian Religion, are such wretched plain Forgeries, and so pitifully contrived Fables, as can never be believed by Men of Sense, and if they could be believed, are proper indeed to make Men Mad and Enthusiastical; but not to advance true Devotion; and he that reads only such Books is qualified indeed to tell Stories and to believe Lies, but no serious truth will stick to him or be valued by him. So that such Books as these are so far from doing good that they do much harm to Religion;



ligion ; for they Imprint a wrong Notion of Religion on Mens Minds ; would make a Man believe that God is like a Child pleased with Trifles, that Religion and the Method of our Salvation is only a Charm and Trick, which the Priests have gotten the receipt of ; but that there is nothing in Christianity fit to make a man wise and manly in his Worship of God, or in the management of himself and practice of Devotion. Nay the Stories which are told in the Lives of their Saints, and believed by the Common People, are enough even to deprave the natural Sentiments of Mankind concerning God and Religion, so that perhaps it were much better to leave Men to the natural effluxes of their own minds, than to pretend to assist them with such Helps as these. That a little *Water* or a *consecrated Bell* should scare the Devil, or St. *Francis's* rope charm and bind him, would make a Man have little fear of such an Enemy, or a prodigious Veneration for such a Saint ; but how it should render a Man more piously affected toward God, more relying on his Providence, or more Religiously Careful over himself, I see not. And these Stories though so apparently false, yet being affirm'd with such Confidence, strike at the very Foundation of our Religion ; For it is apt to make Men believe that Christianity it self was at first propagated among a sad dull stupid and credulous Generation of Men ; ( when as really it first appeared in an Age as sharp-sighted, as any Age before or since, which is much for its Vindication. ) It would tempt a Man to despise a Religion in which such Men are *Saints*, and such Practises commended ; And will set Christianity but on the same level with modern *Judaism* and *Mahometanism* ; For the *Jews* have just as much to say for their *Cabbala*, and the *Turks* for their incredible *Fables* ; for they are reported on the same Credit, are just so credible in themselves, and

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just as edifying of the People that attend to them: The Miracles which they relate being often just so useful, as that pretended to be wrought in the Temple of *Apollo*; when a Man coming out of the Temple, it was observed that his body did not cast any shadow; by which thing however strange in it self, the Man was not much the better, nor the World wiser.

But many of their Books of Devotion are worse than ridiculous; for there are frequently such passages and prayers as I cannot tell how to vindicate from *Blasphemy* and *Idolatry*. *Saint Bonaventure's Psalter* both in *Latin*, and *Italian* I mentioned before, in which there are I believe a thousand such Prayers to her, or Expressions concerning her, which I confess I could not with a safe Conscience say of any Creature. And *Albertus Magnus* the Master of *St. Thomas Aquinas* hath not only 12 Books of the Praises of the *Virgin Mary*, but also a distinct Book called *Biblia Mariana*; in which he applies several places of Scripture to the *Virgin Mary*; as if she were prefigured in several passages of the Old Testament as well as her Son: So *Gen. 1. 5. that she was that Heaven that God made. Gen. 1. 3. She was the Light which God there made;* and so on through almost the whole Scripture: And however Cautious they are in the Books which they Print in English for the use of their Converts here: yet in them we find often such sayings to or of the *Virgin Mary* as I cannot reconcile with Christianity; for so in the *Manual* quoted before, in the Prayers for Women with Child they sing thus to her,

*Hail to the Queen who Reigns above,  
Mother of Clemencie and Love; &c.*

Elsewhere they pray thus to her, pag. 196. O blessed Mother

Mother assist my Weakness in all my Dangers and Necessities, in all Temptations to Sin, and in the hour of my Death, that through thy Protection I may be safe in the Lord. Where the Lord indeed is mentioned, out of Complement, and for Fashions sake, but they had first begged of the Lady as much as they wanted or could desire : and pag. 80. they call her Spouse of the Holy Ghost, Promise of the Prophets, Expectation of the Patriarchs, Queen of the Angels, Teacher of the Apostles, Strengtheners of Martyrs, Faithful Comforter of the Living and Dead. Now if they Print such things in English, what do they Print in Spanish ? If they do such things in a Green Tree, what shall be done in the dry ? And I fear that even their nicest Casuists give too much Countenance to this so gross Practice : For they have determined that Honour's above Civil, *cultus Hyperdulia* are due to the Virgin Mary, that is in plain English, Divine Honours must be paid to her. For it must be a very Metaphysical Head, that can in this Sense apprehend a kind of Honour above Civil, and yet not Divine ; it must be somewhat like his, that would pretend to find a mean between Creator and Creature, between Finite and Infinite.

Lastly, this is most notorious, that they enjoyn acts to be used, and propose Objects of Worship which they themselves cannot deny but there is danger of offending in them, and even of falling into that Idolatry ; and yet take little or no care of giving caution concerning them ; and if the grossest abuse should happen, there is scarcely any possibility of redress.

Indeed wherever they speak of Veneration due to Reliques and Images, of worshipping of Saints, and especially the Virgin Mary, they always seem as if they cared not how much Honour were paid to them ; only they must make as if they put some Restriction on it, for the sake of the reformed who would exclaim against them

think is as much as is due from us to our fellow Creatures, and believe that neither God allows, nor do they expect more from us.

*Secondly, Only proper Expressions of Devotion* are commanded or allowed by our Church. For the matter of them they are such as God himself hath required to be served by, are significant of that disposition of Mind which we know God accepts, and have an aptness to the producing of that temper in us which God intends to work us up to by them: We use all the Instances of Devotion which they of the Church of Rome use, if they be either necessary or fit; though indeed often to other and better purpose. We *pray* constantly, but only for the *living*; for we look on the *Dead* as past the means of Grace, and consequently past the benefit of our Prayers. We *praise* God for his Excellencies in himself, and *thank* him for his Goodness to others as well as to our selves: We practise *Confession* of Sins to God in publick, and in private, and advise it to be made also to the Ministers of Gods Word, when it is necessary for Ghostly Counsel and Advice, for the satisfying of their Consciences, and the removal of Scruple, and Doubtfulness: but we cannot say it is necessary to be made to *Men* in order to the Pardon of God: We reckon it rather as a priviledg or advantage than a Duty? And if Men will not make use of this priviledg, as often as there is Occasion unless we tell a lye to advance the credit of it, we cannot help that: We enjoyn *Fastings* and disallow not of *Penances*, but advise People to take an holy revenge on themselves when they have sinned; but not as the Papists do to *satisfie* for their Sins, or *merit* at Gods hand, but to shew the sincerity of their Repentance, and to strengthen their Resolutions of amendment; for it is our amendment, and not our punishment which God is pleased with. And we take care that all these things

things be performed in a due measure, proportionably to the strength of the Person, and the Nature and Design of the Duty; but are afraid of straining them too high, lest men should be altogether deterred from them, or acquiesce only in the outward Action, or render our selves and our Cause ridiculous by an imprudent management. We have the Sacraments duly administered, as our Saviour commanded them; we reckon our Baptism with Water perfect without Oyl or Spittle: We grutch not the Cup to the Laity, nor celebrate solitary Communion, nor admire whispering to God in the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ; but as we have received from Christ, so we teach and administer, without Addition or Diminution of any thing essential or material. In short, in the holy Offices themselves, and the behaviour which our Church requires they be celebrated with, there is always a great propriety observable, agreeable to the Command of God in Scripture, and the Practice of the Apostles and first Ages of the Church, proper to the several parts of divine Worship, expressive of our Sense, consonant to Reason, and the use of the World, especially respecting always had to the exciting of Piety and Devotion in the minds and carriage of our People:

*Thirdly,* All useful Helps, Motives and Occasions are here plentifully afforded and pressed on Men. For we not only have all our Service in a Language which the meanest People understand, but have it so contrived by frequent Responses, that every Person bears a part in that Worship which he is so much concerned in, and doth not only hear the Priest speak to God Almighty, but prays for himself, and is required to joyn his assent to every short Prayer by a distinct *Amen*. With us the same Service and Rules of Life are enjoyned to all, all Men having the same Concern in another Life however different

ent their Circumstances and Concerns are in this Life. We have constant Prayers in every Parish weekly at least, in many daily, with the blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ frequently administred, nay every *Sunday*, not only in Cathedrals, but in several Colledges and private Parish Churches. And we appeal to all Men whether there be any where more practical Sermons, fitted to the Cases of Men, without Vanity and Superstition, than among us; Whether good and free Learning be any where more encouraged, or where better care is taken for the due Instruction of the People: The Scriptures being in every one's hands, with us, and other excellent Books made according to the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, instead of Legends and Lives of Saints, *St. Bonaventure's Psalter*, and other such Books which are really Libels against Christianity, and yet are the principal Books which the Priests of the Church of *Rome* commend to their People: For as for the Bible, if any one of them hath happened to read in it, who is not licensed to that purpose, he must own it as a Sin to his Priest at his next Confession.

And as there are such blessed Opportunities afforded so constantly, and such *Prudent Provision* made for all Cases Ordinary and Extraordinary, so I thank God, we can say that our People are generally very diligent in the use of these Means; (or would be more so, were it not for the Divisions which they of the Church of *Rome* especially raise among us.) For they may easily perceive that we urge no more on them than their own good, and the commands of God require of them; though our Church knows her Power very well, yet she makes use of it only to enforce the Laws of God, to explain, illustrate and apply them to particular Cases, but never to set up her own Commands in Opposition to them, as  
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the Church of *Rome* doth ; and therefore though we teach our People to dread an Excommunication, it being *summum futuri Judicii Præjudicium*, as *Tertullian* calls it, a foretast or forestalling of the last Judgment ; and not for a World to lye under it, though it were inflicted only for Contempt ; yet we warn them in the first place to avoid the Cause and Occasion of Excommunication, and therefore not to value what Censures of the Church of *Rome* we are under, they being so very unjust and Groundless.

*Fourthly*, and *lastly*, as only the true Object of Devotion is here worshipped, only proper Expressions allowed, all useful Helps afforded ; so also the greatest stress is laid on the Practice of it, agreeable to the true Nature, End and Design of it. The Principal ends of Devotion are to pay a Homage to God our great Creator and Benefactor, to get his Blessing, and to work our selves up to a better temper of Mind : And to this end we are in our Service importunate without Vanity or Impertinency, long without Tedioufness, or Idle Repetitions ; ( Only we use the Lord's Prayer often, that no part of our Service may be without that perfect form, and also in Consideration of the great Comprehensiveness of it, and of the Distraction of Men's Minds which seldom can attend to the full Sense of it all at one time. ) And we teach our People that every Man must work for himself, for he that prays only by a Proxy, it is very just that he should be rewarded only by a Proxy too ; we put our People in mind that an unfeigned Repentance is absolutely Necessary, and not a Verbal one only : That it is out of our power, and of any Man's in the World to turn *Attrition* into Contrition. We pretend not to dispense with any for not obeying the Command of God. We have no *Taxa Camera* by which the Papists are shown

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how all Sins are fined in their Church; for in that Book Men see at what Charge they may kill a Father, or commit Incest with their Sisters: But we assure all, that *the Wages of Sin is Death*, Death Eternal, if indulged and not most earnestly repented of. And we tell all that Devotion is necessary for all, though the Church of Rome hath ways of gratifying every Inclination, so as they that will not lead a strict Life, need not, and yet may have hopes of Salvation: We own their Policy in this Contrivance, but do not so much admire their Religious regard to the Salvation of Mens Souls.

And to conclude, though we thus forcibly press all Christian Duties on all Men; yet at the same time we warn them not to pretend to Merit Heaven at God's Hand; but after they have done their best, to confess they are *unprofitable Servants*. We say of our Charity or whatever else we do in Obedience to God, that *of his own we give to him*, and we are bound to thank him both for the Will and the Ability to give. The most that we pretend to, is only to make a small Acknowledgment by way of Sacrifice for what we have received; we beg of God to accept it as a Testimony of a grateful Mind, and we know that his Goodness is so great, that he will abundantly reward an honest and sincere Servant, though he hath done no more than was his Duty: And we hope that what we offer though mingled with many Imperfections, he will be pleased to accept for the sake of Christ as if it were perfect.

These are the Grounds that we go on in our Devotions, and whatever we do for the Honour of God; and thus designing and thus acting and persisting, we need not doubt but the good Providence of God which watcheth



eth over his whole Church, will in an especial manner watch over this which is so pure a Member of it ; that he will accept of the Devotions which are offered to him in it, and hear the *Prayers* that are made unto him for it, and defend it against all its Enemies on every side ; which God of his Infinite Mercy grant for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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*F I N I S.*

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